

Robert J. Taylor House
211 Point Street
Saltsburg
Indiana County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5420

HABS
PA,
32-SALT,
22-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROBERT J. TAYLOR HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5420

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PA,
32-SALT,
22-

Location: 211 Point St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Gloria J. Berringer.

Present Use: Multi-family residence.

Significance: This building historically served as a multi-unit commercial and residential space, the initial home of the Saltsburg Bank and the long-time home-shop of saddler and canal-boat captain Robert Taylor. The building itself is notable for its size and separate units, though stylistically undistinguished.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1838, possibly to replace a pre-existing frame dwelling (tax records).
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands, historically lot No. 17. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Indiana, Pennsylvania.

1830 Deed October 27, 1830, Volume 7, Page 583.
William and Nancy Sterret
TO
William and Rachel Stewart

1853 Deed September 19, 1853, Volume 19, Page 330.
William and Rachel Stewart
TO
Margaret R. Taylor

1881 Deed February 24, 1881, Volume A-43, Page 594.

Robert J. and Margaret Taylor

TO

William R. McIlwain

1937 Deed January 9, 1937, Volume 286, Page 137.

William McIlwain

TO

Charles McIlwain

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located, however the building appears to be somewhat altered from its historic two-story, brick, L-plan mass.
4. Alterations and additions: A three-bay, two-story brick addition was made to the east end of the main block at approximately the same time the latter was constructed. The center gable on the south facade was a Victorian accretion of the late-nineteenth century. Integrated porches on the rear interior facades have been enclosed as part of structure, and a modern wood deck with exterior stairs installed along the north facade. Prior to 1886 through at least 1927 a one-story frame addition was located off the north ell wall (Sanborns).

- B. Historical Context: Robert J. Taylor married Margaret Stewart, daughter of William Stewart the property owner up to the middle of the century. Taylor is believed to have built the house about 1838, while the site was in his father-in-law's name; he lived there from the 1850s through 1881. A canal-boat captain and therefore a prominent citizen, Taylor operated a saddlery shop in the building, which accounts for the second entrance on the main facade (Peelor). When the Saltsburg Bank was founded in 1871, it was first housed in the three-bay eastern addition to Taylor's house (Beers).

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This traditional Pennsylvania L-plan dwelling and store includes several entrances but is not noted for any distinguishing architectural features.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: About 55' x 30', with a 22' x 18' ell (Sanborns).
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Walls: Brick, generally laid in four-course American bond; and frame, along the interior of the rear facades where the porches are enclosed. The Victorian gable is clad with shingles. There are pseudo-brick sheets of asphalt on the enclosed interior east wall.
4. Structural system: Load-bearing brick and frame.
5. Porches: The two integrated porches on the interior rear facades have been enclosed with a frame structure. To the north facade, a second-story, modern wood deck has been added.
6. Chimneys: One interior brick gable-end chimney on the west gable end; one brick ridge (the east gable end of the original block prior to the three-bay addition).
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The south facade features the original central entrance (third bay from west): single, paneled wood door with abbreviated side-lights and a semicircular transom. The first and fifth bays contain secondary doors that are much-altered: transoms are boarded up and aluminum doors have been installed. The three-bay addition contains a first-floor storefront with central, single door flanked by display windows; this opening has been reduced by the installation of a modern door that is smaller than the original, with the space awkwardly filled in with

clapboard.

The rear facade features at least three doors on the first floor, and one on the second; all have been modernized to some degree.

- b. Windows: On the south facade, the eight bays of the second floor and two bays of the first story contain two-over-two-light double-hung wood sash supported by narrow sills and lintels with bull's-eye corners; the attic gable contains a one-over-one-light double-hung sash.

The windows flanking the three-bay addition are two-over-one-light double-hung wood sash set within a storefront composition that includes blind sidelights and simple cornice supported by four pairs of heavy brackets. The rear and ell facades feature miscellaneous fenestration including two-over-two-light and six-over-six-light sash.

- 8. Roof: Gable, cross-gable with asphalt shingles.
- C. Site: Facing south, across and among the historically developed block of Point Street, the building is east of the canal right of way and railway tracks.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historical images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

Johnson, George B., and Palmer, Ann. Saltsburg--The Way It Was--An Appreciation. Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986.

Peelor, David, and Barker, W. "Map of Indiana County, Pennsylvania." North Hector, New York: 1856.

"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Philadelphia: John M. Gresham and Co., 1891; reprinted 1982.

Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

McCullough, Robert, and Leuba, Walter. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. York, Pa.: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1973.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-

format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).